

ASSYRIAN
PRIVATE CONTRACT-TABLETS.

TRANSLATED BY

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THE following private contract-tablets will give some idea of the activity of trade and business in Western Asia in the 7th and 8th centuries B.C. In consequence of the overthrow of Tyre, Carchemish seems to have become the chief commercial centre of the Eastern world. The clay-tablets are attested by the seal-impressions, or in lieu thereof, by the nail-marks, of the parties to whom they belonged. Several of them have dockets attached, written in the Phœnician character; and these bilingual legends are valuable corroborations of the accuracy of Assyrian decipherment. The tablets here translated will be found in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. III, plates 46-50.

TRANSLATION OF THE TABLETS.

TABLET I.

Ten shekels of the best silver, (being) chains for ISTAR of Nineveh, which BILU-BALADH, in the presence of MANU-CI-ARBELA [here follow 3 seals], has lent on a loan; the silver is to have interest paid upon it at 4 per cent. On the 3rd day of the month the silver has been given. (Dated) 3rd day of the month Sebat, during the eponymy of RIMMON-SALLIM-ANI.¹ The witnesses (were): KHATTAL-MUNU, RAHU, KULDUIN, NERIGLISSOR, ARAKH-NEBO the Serippian, MUSEZIB-ASSUR, NEBO-SALLIM-SUNU, KHANNI, (and) BIL-SADAN.

[Then follow two lines and a half of Phœnician, the first of which consists of the proper name, Mannugi-Arbela.]

TABLET II.

Two talents of iron, the property of ISTAR of Arbela, which MANNU-CI-ARBELA, in the presence of SAMAS-AKHI-ERIB, in the month of Ab gives; if they are not given back, at 3 per cent. shall be the interest upon them. On the 11th day of the month Sivan during the eponymy of BAMBA;² before the witnesses: ISTAR-BAB-ESSES, KUA, SARRU-IKBI, DUMKU-PANI-SARRI, (and) NABUA.

TABLET III.

Four manehs of silver according to the standard of Carchemish, which NERIGLISSOR, in the presence of NEBO-SUM-IDDIN, son of NEBO-RAHIM-BALADHI, the Keeper of the Crown, from the city of Dur-Sargon, lends out at 5 shekels of silver per month interest. The 26th day of the month Iyyar, during the Eponymy of GABBARU.³ The witnesses

¹ In 650-640 B.C.

² 676 B.C.

³ 667 B.C.

(were): NEBO-PAL-IDDIN, NEBO-ATSIB, the holder of the two sceptres, AKHI-RAMU, of the same office, ASSUR-DANIN-SARRI, of the same office, DI'SI the astronomer, SAMAS-IGUR . . . , SIN-MATI-KALI the executioner, (and) MERODACH- . . . the astronomer.

TABLET IV.

The seal of EBED-ISTAR, the master of the men. The giving-up of HOSHEA, his two wives MIH'SA (and) BADIA, 'SIGABA, BEL-KHARRAN-CUNUCCI, (and) his two daughters, in all 7 persons, slaves, whom EBED-ISTAR has sold; and 'SIMADI for 3 manehs of silver has taken. The whole sum I have given. A full exchange is made: I have not defaulted. The witnesses (are) BEL-NURI the *priest*, AM-YATEHU, 'SANGI, KAT-I'SA (and) 'SIDUR. [The name of the 6th witness is not filled in]. The month Tisri; the Eponymy of DANANU.¹

[Then follow two lines of Phœnician which may be translated (1) "The sale of Hoshea, (2) in all 7 persons, the property of Ebed-Istar."]

TABLET V.

The nail-mark of SARRU-LUDARI, the nail-mark of ATAR-'SURU, (and) the nail-mark of the woman AMAT-'SUHALA, the wife of BEL-DURU, the , the owner of the house (which) is given up. [Then follow 4 nail marks.] The whole house with its woodwork, and its doors, situated in the city of Nineveh, adjoining the houses of MANNU-CI-AKHI and ILU-CIYA, (and) the property of 'SUKAKI he has sold, and TSILLU-ASSUR the astronomer, an Egyptian, for one maneh of silver (according to) the royal (standard), in the presence of SARRU-LUDARI, ATAR-'SURU, and AMAT-'SUHALA, the wife of its owner, has received it. The whole sum I

¹ Cir. 680 B.C.

have given. This house has been taken possession of. A full exchange is made. I have not defrauded. Whosoever (shall act) feloniously among any of these men who have sworn to the contract and the agreement, which (is) before (our) prince ASSUR, 10 manehs of silver shall he pay. The witnesses (are): SU'SAN-KUKHADNANIS, MURMAZA the , RA'SUAH the pilot, NEBO-DUR-SANIN the partitioner of the enemy, MURMAZA the pilot, SINNIS-NACARAT, (and) ZEDEKIAH. The 16thth day of the month Sivan, the eponymy of ZAZA¹ of the city of Arpad, before SAMAS-ITSBAT-NACARA, LATTURU, (and) NEBO-SUM-YUTSUR.

¹ 692 B.C.



END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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